

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 00896 251419Z

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INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, IS

SUBJ: SHARM ES-SHEIKH IN SADAT'S PERCEPTIONS

REF: TEL AVIV 1073

1. EVERY INDICATION IS THAT SADAT'S REMARK TO DE BORCHGRAVE ABOUT SHARM ES-SHEIKH (FINAL PARA REFTEL) REFLECTS EGYPTIAN VIEW THAT AHARM DOES NOT CONTROL WATER PASSAGE TO EILAT, BUT THAT BAB AL-MANDAB DOES; AND THAT WITH AHARM'S POSITION NEUTRALIZED BY EGYPT'S ABILITY TO BLOCKADE THE BAB AL-MANDAB AT WILL, THERE IS NO SUBSTANCE TO ISRAEL'S STATED NEED TO RETAIN IT.
2. THIS POSITION WAS MOST CLEARLY STATED IN NOVEMBER IN BRIEFING GIVEN BY WAR MINISTER ISMAIL TO STRATTON COMMITTEE. AT THAT TIME ISMAIL SAID THAT BLOCKADE OF BAB AL-MANDAB HAD INVALIDATED ISRAELI CLAIM TO SHARM AND HAD "PROVED" THAT THE ONLY GUARANTEE OF FREEDOM OF PASSAGE FOR ISRAELI SHIPPING WAS A SETTLEMENT.
3. SUBSEQUENT REMARKS BY EGYPTIANS BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT GOE HAVE REFLECTED THE SAME VIEW, AND THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION THAT SADAT IS PREPARED TO RELINQUISH EGYPTIAN CLAIM OF SOVEREIGNTY TO SHARM. GOE OFFICIALS HAVE STATED AND REPEATED THAT EGYPT IS PREPARED TO SEE AN ARRANGEMENT FOR SHARM WHICH COULD INCLUDE THE PRESENCE OF INTERNATIONAL (BUT NOT

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 00896 251419Z

ISRAELI) FORCES FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME, AS LONG AS THOSE

FORCES DID NOT TURN INTO AN ARMY OF OCCUPATION BUT THAT SHARM
MUST NOT, AT THE END OF IT ALL, BE A POSSESSION OF ISRAEL.
IN RECENT TALKS WITH CONGRESSMAN FRELINGHUYSEN AND WITH
READERS DIGEST EDITORS, SADAT AGAIN STRESSED HE IS NOT PREPARED
TO GIVE UP ANY EGYPTIAN TERRITORY.
ELITS

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